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THE
New Year's Gift

DEFENDED,

IN A

LETTER

TO THE

Rev. Mr. COLLIER:

OCCASIONED BY

His SERMON on the Thirtieth
of *January* last.

By AMOS HARRISON.

He that is first in his own Cause seemeth just, but his Neighbour cometh and searcheth him. Prov. xviii. 17.

Open Rebuke is better than secret Love. Prov. xxvii. 5.

Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right? Gen. xviii. 25.

The Lord is righteous in all his Ways. Psal. cxlv. 17.

L O N D O N:

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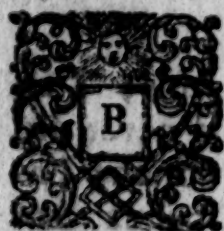
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A
L E T T E R
T O T H E
Rev. Mr. COLLIER.

REVEREND SIR,



B EING an ear-witness of your doctrine, which you delivered on the 30th of *January* last, and perceiving that it was designed as an Answer to my *New Year's Gift*, it hath occasioned my researching the holy scripture upon that topic. And the more I have researched and re-examined the holy scriptures, the more I am confirmed in my former opinion, that God does not punish one generation for the sins of another.

I therefore intreat your patience, (at least for one half hour) and beg that you would not think me destitute of common modesty, while I am pointing out to you what I apprehend to be your misconstructions and misapprehensions of some passages of holy writ, which you mentioned in your sermon.

Two things, Sir, embolden me in this undertaking; the one is, that the matter in controversy betwixt us, no ways concerns church-governors, nor church-government. Papacy, prelacy, presbitery, and independency, remain just as they are, on which side of the question soever the truth may be supposed to lie or appear.

But that which inspires me with the greatest courage and comfort, is a firm persuasion of mind that my cause is good; for (if I deem right) the matter in controversy between us is the very same that was (in days past) between almighty God and the rebellious house of *Israel*, who used this four proverb, that *the father's had eaten sour grapes, and the childrens teeth were set on edge*. And as almighty God said that they *should have no occasion to use this proverb in Israel*, for the same reason I think it ought not to be in our *British Israel*, and therefore I am resolved to do all I can to prevent its being proclaimed in the streets of our *English Zion*. Thus (to my inexpressible joy of heart) I find my self on the Lord's side.

The matter in dispute between us is this; I assert from the press, that almighty God never did nor never will punish one generation for the sins of another, and you assert from the pulpit that God may justly sometimes punish wicked children for their forefathers' sins.

Having thus fairly stated the matter in controversy between us, I come now to the main business which I intend, which is to point out to you what I apprehend to be your misrepresentations of several texts of scripture in favour of your doctrine. And I shall begin where you begun, even with your text; *our fathers have sinned and are not, and we have born their Iniquities. Lam. v. 7*. I remember you thus glossed upon the words: *Our fathers have sinned and are not*, that is, they are dead, they were not pu-

punished for their sins; but we their children, we have been punished, we have born their iniquities. I have heard of one man who thought you very happy in the choice of your text, and said (not for want of ignorance) that the bare reading of the text was sufficient to prove the doctrine; and if your gloss on the words were as true as the lively oracles of God, I should be of the same opinion: but, Sir, I think your gloss upon the words of your text to be very foreign to the words, and also to the sense and meaning of them. In order to discover the true import and meaning of the words, and make it plain to the meanest capacity, I will resolve these four queries. 1st, Who the *fathers* were that had *sinned and were not*? 2^{dly}, Who the *children* were that *bore their iniquities*? 3^{dly}, How and after what sort and manner they did bear their fathers iniquities? and 4^{thly}, the nature of the words themselves, and the intention and design of the prophet in using them.

But before I resolve these queries, I shall premise, that the book of *Lamentations* is a mournful instructive poem, which the prophet *Jeremiah* wrote (for the learning of the *Jews*) concerning the *Babylonish* captivity, and the words under consideration relate to the full accomplishment of that captivity, as appears from these words in the fifth and sixth verses: *our necks are under persecution, we labour and have no rest; we have given the hand to the Egyptians and Assyrians to be satisfied with bread.* And this brings me to the first query, Who the *fathers* were that had *sinned and were not*? My answer is, the *Jews* that perished by the famine, sword, and pestilence, in the long and strait siege of *Jerusalem* and the cities of *Judah*. These were the fathers that had sinned, in forsaking the Lord, and refusing to return; *but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose*

arose against his people; till there was no remedy. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. Thus the fathers that had sinned and were not, were so far from not being punished (as you glossed upon the words) that they died in and for their iniquities.

The 2^d query is, Who the *children* were that *bore their iniquities*? I answer, the small remnant that escaped the famine, sword, and pestilence; these were the *children* that *bore their iniquities*, as is manifest from the words both before and after the text; where it is said, that *their necks were under persecution, that they had no rest, and that servants ruled over them, and that they got their bread in the peril of their lives.* These things must refer to the remnant that escaped, according to the word of the prophet, *except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom.* Isai. i. 9.

The 3^d query is very pertinent and important, How and after what sort and manner they *bore their fathers iniquities*? I answer, they bore the sins of their fathers upon the shoulders of their own practice. There is no occasion to depart from the letter of the text, and conclude that they bore the punishment of their fathers sins; (this, Sir, was your conclusion) but alas, Sir, they bore the sins themselves; they were laden with their fathers sins. And here I shall point out two things; 1st, that my conclusion exactly agrees with the scripture-language; and 2^{dly}, prove my conclusion true from plain historical facts recorded in the scripture. I begin with the *first*: it agrees with the scripture-stile and language. The scripture frequently does represent sin as a burden, and sinners as laden with it. Thus the apostle Paul speaks of *filly women that were laden with sins, being led away with divers lusts,* 2 Tim. iii. 6. and the ever blessed Jesus invites poor sinners to him, as being *heavy laden,* Mat. xi. 28. and the psalmist saith, *mine iniquities are gone over mine head*

head as a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me. *Psal.* xxxviii. 4. The proto-martyr Stephen, disputing with his adversaries, says of Israel, that *they took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of their God Remphan, Acts.* viii. 43. and he that takes up a burden is in a fair way to carry it. And the prophet *Amos* saith, that they bore this sin which Stephen saith they took up, in these words, *but ye have born the tabernacle of your Moloch, Amos* v. 26. This conclusion agrees with the scripture-language. And this shews (as least) a probability that it may be true. But I will go yet farther, and reduce this probability to a real certainty, by proving by historical facts from the scripture-record, that they did bear their fathers iniquities in their own practice. The xlith chapter of *Jeremiah* is one continued proof of this. The first verse shews that the word of the Lord came to the prophet Jeremiah concerning the Jews that had escaped the famine, sword, and pestilence, in the siege of *Jerusalem*, and which fled to *Egypt* and other places; and then follows the word of the Lord in these words, *thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, ye have seen all the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, and upon all the cities of Judah; and behold this day they are a desolation, and no man dwelleth therein: because of their wickedness which they have committed, to provoke me to anger in that they went to burn incense and to serve other Gods.* Thus, Sir, they had seen how their fathers had sinned and were not, and yet so stupid were they as to bear their fathers sins in their own practice, as is manifest from these words in the 7th and 8th verses; therefore thus saith the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel, wherefore commit you this great evil against your souls, to cut off from you man and woman, and child and suckling out of Judah, to leave you none to remain; in that ye provoke me to wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense unto other Gods in the land of Egypt, whither

ther ye be gone to dwell. Thus they bore the sins of their fathers in the land of *Egypt*, and fully resolved not to throw it off from their shoulders, as is manifest from their wicked words to the prophet which they express thus, *as for the word which thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee: but we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem.* Hence learn, that although their fathers *had sinned and were not*, yet their sins lived in their children's practice. And these are the very persons mentioned in your text, as is plain from the words before your text, where the prophet speaketh of the same persons, *we have given the hand to the Egyptians, and to the Assyrians, to be satisfied with bread.*

The 4th and last query is, Of what nature the words are, and the design of the prophet in using of them? To which I answer, that the words are not a complaint that they were punished for their fathers sins, but a complaint against the children for living in their fathers sins, when their *fathers had sinned and were not*; and the design of the prophet was to awaken them out of their fatal stupidity. *Our fathers have sinned and are not*: O awakening sentence! as if the prophet should say, What, will you live in the sins that were the death of your fathers, will you bear your fathers iniquities which bore your fathers out of the world, under the tokens of the divine displeasure? If you bear your fathers iniquities, you shall bear your fathers plagues. And that the prophet thus reasoned with them, is plain from his own words, which he spake unto them in the name of the Lord. *I will punish them that dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem by the sword,*

sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence. So that none of the remnant of Judah, which are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall escape or remain, Jer. xlv. 13. 14.

I think it is more than probable, that the prophet wrote the book of his *Lamentations* before the captivity; for having the spirit of prophecy, he foresaw all the evil before it came to pass. This mournful instructive poem seems to be written upon the death of *Josiah*, as appears from these words, *and Jeremiah lamented for Josiah, and all the singing men and the singing women speak of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made an ordinance in Israel: and behold they are written in the Lamentations, 2 Chron. xxxv. 25.* The prophet first sings *Jerusalem* tributary, and then desolate, and in the fifth chapter he sings the state and condition of the remnant that escaped; and in text he severely reproves their stupidity, in bearing their fathers iniquities, after their fathers had perished in them. One thing more I will just hint, *viz.* that although the term *we* does generally include the person speaking, yet it does not always do so; as for instance, the apostle *Peter* was not a gentile, although speaking of the gentiles, he saith, *we shall be saved even as they. Acts xv. 11.* Again, the Apostle *Paul* is long since fallen asleep in *Jesus*, notwithstanding, he saith twice in one breath, *we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them that are asleep, 1 Thess. iv. 15, 17.* Once more, the apostle *James* was no profane curser of men, although speaking of the evils of the tongue, he saith, *therewith curse we men, Jam. iii. 9.* So in like manner the prophet is not included in the words of the text, for he did not worship the queen and host of heaven, but the God of heaven. Nay, if your exposition of the text be true, the prophet is still to be excluded, or else your

text will prove too much for your purpose. For all you pleaded for in your doctrine, was, that wicked children were sometimes punished for their forefathers sins; and the prophet was not a wicked person, but a holy man of God. But if you are yet persuaded that your doctrine and exposition of the text be true, I entreat your patience to bear with me, while I point out some inconsistencies between your exposition, and several passages in the same poem. In the third chapter and 42d verse, the prophet is instructing them to confess their own sins, in these words, *we have transgressed and have rebelled, thou hast not pardoned*; and in the fifth chapter, ver. 16. *the crown is fallen from our head, wo unto us that we have sinned*. Here their own sins are pointed out to be the cause of their woe, therefore not their fathers. Moreover, their own sins being the cause of their woe, the prophet teaches them that they had no cause to complain, in these words; *wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?* Lam. iii. 39. Hence the prophet exhorts them in the following words to *search and try their ways, and turn again to the Lord*, and to *lift up their heart with their hands unto God in the heavens*. These passages shew that they had sinned, and that their sins were the cause of their woe and punishment; and if their own, then not their fathers. Nay, the prophet further says, that *it was the Lord's mercies they were not consumed*, Lam. iii. 22. which shews, that their own sins were punished less than they deserved, which is inconsistent with being punished for their fathers sins, their own sins being not punished according to the full demerit of them. Thus, Sir, I have pointed out to you, what I think to be the true import and meaning of the words of your text. But whether I have over-reasoned you from your own text, and so overshot you with your own bow, that

that I do not determine ; but modestly leave to the judgment of all that heard you, and that may read me.

I shall next consider your argument concerning the sin of *Manasseh*, which the Lord would not pardon, 2 Kings xxiv. 2. Because the *Babylonish* captivity was many years after *Manasseh's* death, and declared to be for *Manasseh's* sin, you insinuated and argued, that it was for his personal disobedience, and just read the scriptures where it is mentioned, and then said you would not dwell upon it, seeing it might be urged, that it was sin of the same kind ; and so you dismissed it, and went off to the reason of the second commandment, which you thought a full proof of your doctrine. But, dear Sir, before I follow you thither, I thank you for your candid concession in my favour, viz. that *Manasseh's* sin might be thought to be sin of the same kind. This I confess, Sir, was the finest sweetest flower of rhetoric that I picked up in all your discourse. I come now to shew what *Manasseh's* sin was, and then to observe, that it was the darling sin of the people of *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, that were destroyed and captivated by the *Babylonians* ; and then I hope it will appear to the candid reader, that it was not *Manasseh's* personal sin, but sin of the same kind, that procured *Jerusalem's* desolation. *Manasseh's* sin consisted in idolatry and cruelty : his idolatry is expressed in these words ; *he did evil in the sight of the Lord, like unto the abominations of the heathen ; for he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord,* 2 Chron. xxxiii. 2, 3, 5. and this sin of *Manasseh*, was the darling sin of the people of *Judah* and *Jerusalem* in *Zedekiah's* day, and was the cause of

Jerusalem's destruction, as is manifest from these words ; moreover all the chief of the priests and the people transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen, and polluted the house of the Lord which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place. But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age, he gave them all into his hand, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14, 15, 16, 17. From hence it is manifest, that the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem was not for Manasseh's personal sin, but for his sin which lived in the chief of the priests and the people, long after Manasseh was dead and gone. I observe further, that Manasseh was punished in his own person for his own sin, as is manifest from these words ; and the Lord spake to Manasseh, and to his people, but they would not hearken ; wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 10, 11. And I observe further, that in his great affliction he greatly humbled himself before God, and bowed the knee of his heart to God, and God was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem. And may I not here turn the tables upon you, (tho' I confess it is a home bold stroke) and return your kind compliment with usury, and say, one would think a man must be destitute of common sense as well as of common modesty, to assert that Jerusalem's destruction was procured by, and was a punishment for Manasseh's personal wickedness, when Ma-
nasseh

Manasse himself was severely punished for his own sin, and in the fetters of his affliction he truly repented, and God owned him as a returning sinner, and gave him signal tokens of his favour, and caused him to re-mount his throne with honour; and being re-established on his throne, he gave flagrant proofs of the sincerity of his repentance, in that he destroyed the monuments of idolatry which he had formerly set up, and *repaired the altar of the Lord, and offered thereon peace-offerings and thank-offerings*, and did all he could to reform his people, in that *he commanded them to serve the Lord God of Israel*, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 14, 15. In a word, *Manasse* lived and died in God's fear and favour; all his sins were pardoned; for this is a rule with God, that when a *wicked man turneth from his wicked ways, he shall save his soul alive*, Ezek. xviii. 27. and this was verified in *Manasse*, for he cast away all his transgressions, and so iniquity was not his ruin. How then could his sin be punished upon others, when it was forgiven to himself?

But, Sir, I have heavy tidings to tell you, altho' the king was a convert, the priests and the people were corrupt still; idolatry was so knitted in the hearts of the priests and of the people, that no sooner was *Manasse's* head laid in the silent grave, but *Amon* his son, with the priests and people, set up idolatry with an high hand: his reign indeed was short, as wicked kings often are. Then *Josiah*, a pious youth, in the eighth year of his reign, and sixteenth of his age, *he began to seek the Lord God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places and carved images, and to destroy the monuments of idolatry throughout all his dominions*, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3, 4, 6. And altho' he was a great reformer, yet it is evident he could not reform the hearts of his people, altho' it is said of them, that *all his days they de-*
parted

parted not from following the Lord God of their fathers, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 33. It is but too evident, that all this following of the Lord was nothing else but the form of godliness, the life and power of godliness was wanting in them, as is manifest from the word of God which knew their hearts, as plainly appears from the words of the prophet; *the Lord said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? — And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not returned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord. — Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah,* Jer. iii. 6, 10, 11. Thus the corrupt priests and people were corrupt still, and to this the words of the historian seem to refer; *and like unto him there was no king before him that turned unto the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses, neither after him arose there any like him. Notwithstanding, the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal,* 2 Kings xxiii. 25, 26. Hence observe, that *Josiah* was an *Israelite* indeed, in whom was no guile; but with the priests and the people it was quite otherwise; they were treacherous, and turned but feignedly unto the Lord. Hence the anger of the Lord was kindled against *Judah*, because they followed *Josiah* with their lips, but the sin of *Manasseh* lay warm upon their hearts. It was not in *Josiah's* power to circumcise their hearts to the Lord. Hence it came to pass, that as soon as *Josiah's* head was laid, the idolatry that glowed in their hearts under his restraining hand, broke out in a terrible flame; to which the words of another historian relate, *all the chief of the priests and the people transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen, and polluted*

luted the house of the Lord, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14. This was immediately done upon *Josiah's* death. All his sons that reigned after him did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked not in the pious steps of their father, but in the way of *Amon* and *Manasseh*, (when he was an idolater;) but the Lord had still compassion on his people; and sent his prophets to warn them of the impending evil; but the persecuting priests mocked his messengers, despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of God arose against his people, till there was no remedy: thus the provocations of *Manasseh's* sins, that were acted over again by the chief of the priests and the people, long after the reformed *Manasseh* was dead, was the true and real cause of *Jerusalem's* ruin. To which the words of the afore-said historian do relate; *surely at the commandment of the Lord came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight for the sins of Manasseh according to all that he did, and also for the innocent blood that he shed (for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood) which the Lord would not pardon, 2 Kings xxiv. 3, 4.* Thus the sins of *Manasseh*, according to all that he did, were the daily practice of the priests and people, and also shedding of innocent blood, which the Lord would not pardon; and this innocent blood the historian puts to *Manasseh's* score, and speaks of it as of his act and deed, even the shedding of it; and well he might thus speak, forasmuch as *Manasseh* was the chief manager and setter of it up upon the death of his father. Hence it is said, *that he made Judah to sin with his idols; and that he seduced them to do more evil, than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel, 2 Kings xxi. 9, 11.* No wonder then, that the historian scores it up upon *Manasseh's* tally; for as *Jeroboam* made *Israel* to sin, and the sin of the same kind is called the sin of *Jeroboam* several ages afterwards, when

when committed by his successors ; so in like manner *Manasseh* made *Judah* to sin ; he seduced them to it, and so it is called his sin, tho' others committed it after he was dead and gone : and that the priests were the men that shed the innocent blood, which filled *Jerusalem*, which the Lord would not pardon, will fully appear, because it was the blood of innocent babes which were offered in sacrifice to *Moloch*, as is plain from these words ; *also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents*, *Jer.* ii. 34. and that the human sacrifices were all over *Jerusalem*, appears from these words ; *according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to that shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal*, *Jer.* xi. 13. and that they burnt their children on the altars of *Baal*, is plain from these words ; *and have filled this place with the blood of innocents ; they have built also the high places of Baal to burn their sons with fire for burnt-offerings unto Baal*, *Jer.* xix. 4, 5. The sacred hands of the priests were concerned in this work of *sacrificing the sons and daughters of the people unto devils, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan, and the land was polluted with blood*, *Psal.* cvi. 37, 38.

And I may add, that they shed the innocent blood of prophets and righteous men, that had courage enough to withstand or reprove them. *Urijah* the prophet, tho' he fled into *Egypt*, they *set him thence and slew him* ; and his only crime was speaking the truth in the name of the Lord, *Jer.* xxvi. 20, 21, 23. The prophet *Jeremiah* narrowly escaped with his life, more than once, out of the priests hands. The priests drew up their charge against *Jeremiah* in these words to the princes of *Judah* ; *this man is worthy to die, for he hath prophesied against this city ; but to the great mortification of the priests, the princes found him not guilty*, *Jer.*

Jer. xxvi. 11, 16. Having thus pointed out the innocent blood which procured the destruction of *Jerusalem*, which the Lord would not pardon, I come, tripping briskly after you, up to the reason of the second commandment; where I find you in the pulpit (where God should always be glorified) expressing yourself thus: "One would think that
 " a man must be destitute of common modesty,
 " to assert that the reason of the second command-
 " ment does not imply, that God will sometimes
 " punish wicked children for their forefathers sins." I looked upon it as a blustering expression, and was soon convinced, that it was to supply the place of argument; for you only asserted, that the reason of the commandment fully proved your doctrine, but never attempted (at least in my hearing) to invalidate what I had said to the contrary.

Here I confess that I am not wholly destitute of vanity, for I fancy myself triumphing in a clear field; you indeed drew near to the borders, looked over the hedge, and gave the bold author your kind blessing, in a big word or two, and so sheered off, and never entered the field by way of reason and argument. This emboldens me to bid my performance *God speed*, and wish it may do abundance of good in the world, upon the hearts and minds of all that have, or may hereafter read it. May it tend to establish their hearts in the firm belief of these eternal truths; that *the judge of all the earth will do right; that the Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works; that the Almighty is excellent in power and in judgment, and in plenty of justice he will not afflict, and may they therefore fear him*, and always remember, that every one of us must give an account of himself to God; and may this influence them to prove their own works, that so their rejoicing may be in themselves, and not in others. And thus I leave my unconfuted *New*

Year's Gift to shift for itself, and shall only add, that the latter part of the reason of the second commandment, in these words, *and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments*, exactly agrees with my exposition of the former part; for it is not thousands of persons only, but thousands of generations of them that love God, that God shews mercy to. The meaning of the whole reason of the commandment appears to me to be this, *viz.* that God extends the riches of his goodness and long-suffering mercy unto them that hate him; and this rich forbearance of God to them that hate him, may sometimes reach to the third or fourth generation; but to them that love him, he shews mercy, not to the third and fourth generation only, but to thousands of generations; that is, time immemorial. And this agrees with the words of the *Psalmist*, *he hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations*, *Psal. cv. 8.* so that the righteous may in all ages say with *Moses*, *Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations*, *Psal. xc. 1.* they may exultingly say, as the blessed *Mary* did, *his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation*, *Luke i. 50.*

There is another passage of scripture which you urged to prove your doctrine, which I confess I think but mere trifling in me to take any notice of; but yet nevertheless, lest you should think yourself neglected, I will take a brief survey of it. It is the law of God to *Israel*, which strictly enjoined them to make the most diligent search after all murderers and manslayers; so that if a man was found slain in the distant fields, and it was a disputable point which city was nearest, the measuring line was to decide that controversy. The persons enjoined thus to measure, were the elders and judges; and when the nearest city was discovered, the

the elders of that city were to take an heifer, and strike off her head, and all the elders of that city were to wash their hands over the slain heifer, and say, *our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. Be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people, and lay not innocent blood unto their charge. And the blood shall be forgiven them. So shalt thou put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you, when thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of the Lord, Deut. xxi. 1, 2, 3, 8, 9.* The whole passage shews, that a strict enquiry and diligent search was to be made, in order to discover the manslayer; a solemn oath was taken by the elders, that they could not discover the guilty person or persons; they washed their hands over the heifer, in token of their innocency, and say, *our hands have not shed this blood.* Then they pray, *that the innocent blood of the slain man might not be laid to their charge;* whence you conclude, that they were liable to be punished for the blood which they did not shed. Consider, dear Sir, what should God lay to their charge? It will be blasphemy to say, that God will accuse them falsely, and lay the death of the slain man to their charge, whom they slew not. The truth of the matter, I think, Sir, lies here; namely, that it was the incumbent duty of the judges, elders, and citizens, to do all that lay in their power, to avenge the innocent blood that was shed upon him, or them that shed it; and if they were careless and negligent in not detecting and discovering of murder, God might in this case justly lay the life of the murderer to their charge; for it is a great sin to let a murderer live; it is a palpable breach of God's law, *whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, Gen. ix. 6.* and this is (in my apprehension) plainly pointed out in these words, *so shalt thou put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you, when thou dost that which is right in the sight of the Lord.*

Now that which is right in the sight of the Lord, is to put the murderer to death ; and by killing the murderer, they put away the guilt of not avenging innocent blood. It was for this that the judges, elders and citizens, came forth to make the most diligent scrutiny and search, in order to find out the murderer, that they might put him to death ; but in case the murderer was not discovered, there might be sufficient cause to pray, that God would be merciful to them, and not lay the sin of not avenging innocent blood to their charge, because there might be some defects in their conduct, with relation to their search after the murder ; either it might not be so speedily done as was needful, or not so strict and extensive, as was their duty to have made it. The truth is, Sir, that in our best performed duties, there is (at least) the tincture of sin, which is the iniquity of our holy things, which we have reason to pray may be forgiven.

By this time, I presume, you perceive the difference between your apprehension and mine. You conceive, that the citizens might be exposed to the wrath of God for the blood which others shed, and so be punished for the sins of others ; I apprehend, that the citizens might be exposed to the divine displeasure for their own sin, in not avenging the innocent blood upon the head of the murderer ; or, in other words, in not doing all they could to find out and slay the murderer. I conclude this with appealing to your own conscience, whether you think yourself an object of the divine displeasure, upon supposition, that undiscovered murders have been committed in the town of *Croydon* within four generations last past. I presume, Sir, that you do not.

I come now, Sir, to the application of your sermon, in which you endeavoured to awaken your auditors to a lively sense of their duty and danger ;
even

even to humble themselves before God, and to cry mightily unto him for pardon, that the innocent blood shed in 48, might not be visited upon us. And here, I confess, that your application keeps a due proportion with your doctrine. I look upon it to be just as seasonable, as your doctrine is reasonable. I shall take notice of some things which you delivered in your application, which I shall take the liberty to call your politicks. The first I chuse to mention is this; In order to fix in our minds a sense of our present danger, arising from king *Charles's* innocent blood, you told us, that it still cries for vengeance, the fourth generation not being yet past. Here, I observe, that you gave us a kind and pleasant hint, that when the happy day shall dawn beyond the fourth generation, the danger will be all over, and the cry of the innocent blood will cease: and here I give you hearty thanks for setting a door wide open to me, into which I willingly enter, and call my dear countrymen together, even the children in knowledge, that are not yet grown to men in understanding, but childishly think that God punisheth one generation for the sins of another. Ho! all of you, draw near and give your attendance; *I will feed you with milk, and not with strong meat, seeing that you are not able to bear it*; I bring you happy tidings, that the fourth generation from 48, is long since gone and past, and upon the most moderate computation that can be made (according to scripture-direction) we are at least happily arrived into the sixth generation; for the term generation, when used in scripture to measure time, always imports the period of time from father to son, or in other-words, the term of a man's life. Thus *Solomon* useth the word, saying, *one generation passeth away, and another cometh, but the earth abideth for ever*, *Eccles. i. 4.* and thus *Jehu's*
children

children of the fourth generation sat on the throne of Israel, 2 Kings xv. 12. And these four generations made 74 years and 6 months. But sometimes one generation will be a longer term of time than all these 4 generations were; for a generation, as it is a measure of time, does not signify a fixed number of years, but the term of a man's life or king's reign, and thus it comes to pass, that one generation may be much longer than another; as for instance, one of the generations of *Jehu's* children was forty-one years, and another was but six months.

From *Abraham* unto our Lord *Jesus Christ* were forty-two generations, or forty-two lives of the heads of that family which our Lord sprang from, *Mat. i. 17.* Some of these generations were much longer than others, for *Manasseh* reigned fifty-five years, and his son *Amon* reigned but two years. Thus from *David* to the captivity were fourteen generations, or fourteen successions to the throne from father to son; so that a life upon the throne is reckoned a generation. And according to this rule, I think it may be proved (at least as well as many things are proved on the thirtieth of *January*) that we are arrived at the tenth generation, for the supreme power of the nation shifted hands several times before the restoration. The armed force that killed the king held it for some time; after them *Oliver Cromwell*; after him his son *Richard*; after him the remains of the long parliament; and after them a select juncto or committee of safety. But if all these are objected against, I think we are very safe still, for if we reckon *Charles* the second reigning from his father's dying, his reign is one generation; *James* the second two; *William* and *Mary* three; queen *Ann* four; king *George* the first five; and his present majesty six, whom God long preserve. Now, Sir, if according to your hint, the cry of innocent blood for

for vengeance ceaseth at the end of the fourth generation, then upon a moderate computation, the danger expired at queen *Ann's* death; and if so, the first of *August* is a day much to be remembered upon more accounts than one. For according to a prediction which was fathered upon an old stone-horse (somewhere about *London*,)

*When the race of the Stewarts ended,
Our bad times mended.*

According to the words of the merry poet:

*Great George proclaim'd, dissolv'd the spell,
Of France, and Rome, and Hell,
And ever since their projects have fell.*

I come now to a very remarkable interrogation you made to us in these words: How can we certainly know that that dog that gave the fatal stroke, that his blood was shed, and if it were, what was his blood worth? Dear Sir, what shall I say to these things for a pleasant and profitable amusement? Let us suppose, that if you had preached this sermon at *Mexico* or *Peru* to a congregation of christians; and a whole gang of heathen priests, out of curiosity had come to hear you, how would they have pricked up their ears, when you spoke of the worth of blood, and laid their heads together and agreed to wait on you in all their formalities, with a message of thanks for establishing the basis of their horrid rites of human sacrifice? Would you not have been surprised when the chief pontiff in all his pontificalibus had accosted you in such words as these? Sir, we crave leave to wait upon you with our hearty thanks for your good discourse, particularly that part wherein you touched upon human blood. You well observed, *what was his blood worth?* not much indeed Sir; but the blood of innocents which we offer to the Almighty is of great value. We have often had experience that he hath been prevailed upon to give us rest
from

from our enemies, and fruitful seasons, when we have offered up to him such sacrifices. Nay, there is an account in an old writing, (which some of you christians seem to prize very much) of a potent king of *Moab*, when a confederate army invaded his land, and were too hard for him, that *he offered up his own son, that should have reigned after him*, and the happy event was, *that the Almighty was pacified, and his enemies departed from him*, 2 Kings iii. 27. Many of our ancestors were sufferers by a vagabond sort of people, that sprang from one *Abraham*, who led the pilgrim sort of life, and a considerable time after his death, his posterity went down into *Egypt*, and sojourned there many years, and then came out under the conduct of one *Moses* with a very high hand, and after a jaunt of forty years in the wilderness, *Moses* died, and one *Joshua* succeeded him in the government, who with arts and arms made a vast destruction among our ancestors, pretending that God had sent him against us, because we offered our children up in sacrifice; but they were soon convinced of their error, and came into our measures and offered their sons and their daughters in sacrifice as well as we. Nay, they soon learned to sing with the best of us, *wherewith shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the high God? shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?* There were a few nonconforming prophets among them, who said that God did not desire such hot service at their hands, and would fain have made them believe, that God only required of them to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God. *Micah* vi. 8. but the people had more prudence than to listen to such lousy fellows as they were. Once upon a time a scrovy prophet arose among them, and found great fault with their lives and conduct; but the people laid their heads together, and unanimously

mously resolved to *smite him with the tongue, and not give heed to any of his words*; and rendered these weighty Reasons for their conduct; *for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Jer. xviii. 18.* and the prophet, to be revenged of them, cried out, *a wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land, the prophets prophesy falsely and the priests bear rule by their means, and the people love to have it so. Jer. v. 30, 31.* We entertain great hopes, Sir, that you christians will take the same rout that the *Israelites* did, and be reconciled to us. Our hopes are increased, because many of your *priests bear rule by their means, and many of your people love to have it so.* If we have not been misinformed, some of your priests have bore such a rule that by their means they have disposed of crowns and kingdoms, have uncrowned kings, and overthrown emperors, nay, have murdered kings, but not just in that manner as that vile dog did, which you spoke of, whose blood was little worth. Be pleased to consider, Sir, we have all the marks of a true church, we have antiquity, we have authority, we have unity, we have miracles, we have visibility, we shine as kings in the world; while the mean fellows that withstand us, sculk in corners; nay, they have of old *wandered in desarts, in dens, and caves of the earth, have been destitute, afflicted, tormented, have all the day long been accounted as sheep for the slaughter.* We have looked upon you christians as mere libertines, who fondly imagine that the almighty is made up all of goodness; but we hope we have been mistaken in some measure concerning you; we like your doctrine very well, that God punisheth the children for their fathers sins, for this shakes hands with our practice of offering up the children to make an atonement for the fathers sins. If you, Sir, and the rest of your christian brethren be

as near us in all your other sentiments as you be in this, we hope there will be a speedy accommodation brought about betwixt us. O Sir, which way would you have looked? how could you have held up your head under the hearing of such an harangue? but let us call back our imaginations from these heathenish regions, where *Satan's* seat is, and fancy ourselves to be where we really are, in the happy isle of *Great Britain*. May we rejoice and bless God that we were born in *England*, and not in *India*, may we from serious thought write down this conclusion in our own hearts; that murderers are to be put to death, not because there is worth or profit in their blood, not because the Lord hath any *pleasure in the death of him that dieth*, but because the murderer may not have an opportunity to repeat his wickedness, and because there is a demerit in their sin. For sin being the worst thing in the world, it is necessary that it should meet with the worst treatment; and chiefly that others may hear and fear, and do no more so wickedly. I shall only to this topic further add, that if he that gave the fatal stroke could not be discovered, he could not be slain; and consequently the nation is guiltless as to that affair. As the civil magistrate is not to bear the sword in vain, so likewise he is not to draw it, and thrust it into the sides of men at a venture. Surely he is not to act *Solomon's* mad-man, to scatter firebrands, arrows, and death, in a way of sport.

You had one interrogation which I can for myself very readily answer to; How can we certainly know that our forefathers were no ways concerned in bringing about the fatal event of that day? My answer is, that all my forefathers, both by fathers and mothers side, had no hand against the king in all the troubles of that day; and this I as certainly know, as I can know any thing by tradition.

How

How you yourself and the rest of the audience may answer for yourselves, I neither know nor care.

You had another close interrogation, which was, How can we certainly know that we ourselves have not sacrilegious goods in our possession, that were taken away from those that maintained the righteous cause? Here, I confess, that the little silver that passeth thro' my hands in the way of commerce, I be not able to account what hands it hath passed thro', or what vile purposes it hath served a hundred years ago. I am very sensible that cruel devastations always accompany wars, more especially civil wars; for that reason I ever did, and by the grace of God I hope ever shall, in the discharge of the ministerial calling, put the people in mind, *to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gently shewing all meekness unto all men; to study to be quiet and to mind their own business, that so they may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty.*

I can remember you spoke with great assurance, that all the wars that we have been greatly burdened with, were occasioned by the king's death. and here I take the liberty to interrogate with you, as you did us, How do you certainly know, that *Lewis XIV. of France*, would never have disturbed the repose of *Europe*, had it not been for the king's death? do you not certainly know, that the wars which we have engaged in have been general ones, in which the states of *Holland*, and the princes of *Germany*, have bore a great part? I flatter myself, Sir, that you do not think that the states of *Holland*, and princes of *Germany*, were punished for our forefathers sins, tho' you think we are. Do you not certainly know, that our wars have been defensive ones, and that you your own self have defended the justness of them (at least

some of them) both from the pulpit and press, and and that in florid expressions? therefore, Sir, (if you please) you may forbear such confident assurances in things which cannot be certainly known without the divine revelation, at least till you certainly know that you are endued with a spirit of prophesy.

And as for the infamy of the nation abroad upon the score of the king's death, (which you sadly bewailed) I look upon it as a meer scare-crow and bug-bear to frighten silly people at home. I have often heard the complaint of this from ignorant people that know nothing of affairs abroad, but I never heard it from a wise man till I heard it from yourself. One would be apt to think, Sir, that if this fatal tragedy had so deeply wounded the nation's honour, it would have done it at first, while the matter was fresh in all mouths and memories. But what man knows not (that knows any thing of the history of those times) that even *Oliver Cromwell's* name, and the *English nation*, were mentioned in all the courts of *Europe*, with terror, fear, and awe, and not with shame and derision? According to the best information I can get, there is more talk of the nation's infamy on one thirtieth of *January* here at home, than there has been in all the nation's abroad ever since the horrid fact was committed.

In a word, Sir, the whole of your application confirms me, that the doctrine that I have exposed in my *New Year's Gift*, is false in fact, and evil in its tendency; and I think you are a remarkable instance of the truth of this, and pray you to take my observation in good part. On the 9th of *January* 1739, then you preached the truth as it is in *Jesus*, then your doctrine was according to godliness, then you earnestly exhorted your hearers to reform their lives, and to put their confidence
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in God for success and safety, and in the twenty-third page of your *sermon* you have these very judicious expressions ; “ The only danger we have
 “ to fear, is that which comes from ourselves, from
 “ our own sins and unworthiness, from our ungratitude and unthankfulness, and abuse of many
 “ deliverances hitherto wrought for us. But if
 “ our iniquities do not separate between us and
 “ our God, if our sins do not hide his face
 “ from us, if we humble ourselves after a godly
 “ sort, and truly and piously answer the end of
 “ this day’s solemn appointment, by a thorough
 “ and general humiliation and sincere repentance, testified by the genuine fruits of it ; then
 “ I humbly hope, there is no danger, but God
 “ will be ready to hear us and to help us.” But on the 30th of *January* last, when you had a 30th of *January* turn to serve, and which you had a will to serve to the utmost, then you unsaid all these things over again ; then (after giving us a gloomy prospect of the present posture of affairs) you found great danger arising from a very distant quarter, even from our forefathers sins in 48. But the best defence that can (I think) be made for you is, that these things were spoken by you on the 30th of *January*, in order to serve a *January* turn, and that they keep a due proportion to all the rest of the day.

One thing you mentioned concerning the great evils, which the death of the king brought upon us, is to me very surprising, even the flight of the royal family into popish countries, where they learned to be popishly affected. One would think from these expressions, that you designed to make us believe (in case we knew no better) that they were the children of staunch protestants, and had been strictly educated in the protestant religion from the very breast ; but alas, Sir, the case is quite different ;

different ; their royal mother was a zealous papist, and had brought them up in her own religion. So that in all probability they sucked in popery with their mothers milk ; and thus, Sir, while you are clambering up to the top of the tree and pointing out danger to us from the flight of the royal brothers, I intreat you to make haste and come down, for behold the ax is laid at the root of the tree. Our wise legislators have laid the ax of a penal law at the root of popish marriages, so great was the danger of popish marriages in their eyes, that they thought it needful to exclude a protestant heir from the throne, in case he should marry a papist. They seem to fear that a popish *Dalilah* might render the strongest protestant *Sampson* into the hands of her friends, when she had first made him weak as another man. Thus they see great danger where you gave us not the least hint. But I do not wonder at your not mentioning any dangers arising from popish marriages, for that would not have beautified the *January* turn that you were serving. But, Sir, if this penal law which passed in the brave *William's* day, had passed long before, even in *Elizabeth's* day, who can tell, what good effect it might have produced ; it might peradventure have blunted the edge of the king's keen passion towards a popish lady, more than his love for the protestant cause. It might perhaps have caused him to forego a popish lady, rather than to run the desperate risk of foregoing three kingdoms, especially if we consider how great a lover he was of rule and dominion. However, this is apparent, that all his warm zeal for the protestant cause, and all his pious care to support it, were not armour proof against the charms of a popish lady. Nay further, it did not hinder him from entering into articles of marriage, wherein he gave consent that his children should be trained up in the popish religion,

ligion, till they came to a considerable age, thus it happened to the king according to the true proverb; viz. " That they that go to *Rome*, must " do as they do at *Rome*." He that goes to Rome for a wife may expect his children's minds to be poisoned with popish principles, and their lives with popish practices, and how could it be otherwise, considering what a zealot the queen was for the popish religion? She consequently had a tribe of popish zealots near her royal person, and considering how much the prosperity of the popish cause depended on the children's being papists, they would no doubt take effectual care to make them so. They would (if possible) instil popery into their joints and marrow, these children of this world would be so wise in their generation, as to make hay while the sun shone, and to double their diligence, knowing their time was short, so that when the time of popish tutorage was expired, the words of the prophet might be applicable unto them. *Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?* for according to the words of the poet,

Youth is like wax, the first impression takes,

Happy is he where virtue first it makes.

For these reasons, I cannot help thinking but that the royal brothers were very dull scholars, if they had popery to learn when they fled for refuge.

I observe, that the penal law against popish marriages, is not against the exportation of popery, but against the importation of it. I shall leave others to think as they please; but for my own part, I shall always give my vote, that popish flights may be registered amongst protestant blessings. According to my fixed principle, I leave others to judge for themselves; but for my own part, I have heard and read so much of popish cruelty and popish tyranny, that I heartily wish
that

that even the spirit of popery may have a long journey, a clear riddance, and no return.

And now, before I shake hands, and take my leave with you, I would willingly sap the foundation of this doctrine, *viz.* that God punisheth one generation for the sins of another ; or according to the words of your doctrine, *that God may justly punish wicked children for their forefathers sins.* I have heard say, that it is a maxim among physicians, that to find out the cause of a distemper is half the cure. I think I have found out the cause, at least one cause, why many well-meaning people embrace this opinion ; and I shall endeavour to remove the cause, by shewing the falsity of it ; and then I hope the effect will cease. The cause I take to be this ; the not rightly distinguishing between suffering, and punishment ; but fondly thinking that all sufferings are punishments ; so that whensoever they see, or hear, or speak, or think, or feel suffering, the notion of punishment presently starts up in their minds, and they speak and think of these sufferings as punishments ; and observing, that these sufferings flow from some misconduct of their fathers, they presently conclude, that they are punished for their fathers sins. But this is a false conclusion ; for altho' all punishment is suffering, it doth not thence follow, that all suffering is punishment. I observe, that many great sufferers are not in the least degree under the divine displeasure upon the account of their sufferings, but quite the reverse ; their sufferings intitle them to the divine favour, as is plain from these words of *Christ*, *Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil for the son of man's sake. Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold your reward is great in heaven, Luke vi. 22.* and to this agrees the words of the Apostle, *Our light afflictions,*
which

which are but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17. Such sufferings are no punishments, but give proper cause for joy and rejoicing. Hence the first and best christians took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that in heaven they had a better and more enduring substance, Heb. x. 34. And I further add, that the greatest sufferings that ever were in the world, were not punishments to him that bare them; even he that bare our sins in his own body upon the tree, who suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. Whose sorrow was like to his sorrow? Who can weigh or measure his sufferings in the garden, when he was sore amazed and very heavy, and said, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death*; when he was in an agony, and sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, falling from him unto the ground? Mark xiv. 33, 34. Luke xxii. 44. But in all these sufferings our dear Lord was so far from being under the divine displeasure, or an object of his father's hatred, that he was an object of his love, according to our Lord's own words; *therefore doth my father love me, because I lay down my life*, John x. 17. Hence the Apostle saith, *that he hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour*, Eph. v. 2. Our blessed Lord, in all his sufferings, could not be an object of his father's hatred, for these two reasons; 1st, because all his sufferings were acts of obedience to the will of his father; and surely the father could not be displeased with the fulfilling of his own will: and 2^{dly}, the sufferings of Christ intitle him to an infinite reward. Surely, saith Christ, *my work is with my God*, Isa. xlix. 4. and for his dying work, according to the Apostle, he receives the greatest dominion; as is plain from these words, *he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name, that*

at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. The Lord Jesus shall reap a rich harvest of his sufferings. Our Lord never speaks of his sufferings as punishment, but as his labour and work; *I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do, John xvii. 4.* It is indeed a great truth, nay, it is the sum and substance of the gospel, that Christ died for our sins; that he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes are we healed; that we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. But all this will not prove, that the Lord Jesus was an object of the Father's displeasure; for all this was done in obedience to the Father's will. And that the Father was pleased with the Son, in and for doing his will, is expressed in these words, *Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth, Isa. xlii. 1.* In the sufferings of Christ, the Father upheld him and succoured him, and the Son foresaw the Father always before his face; *the Father was on his right hand, that he should not be moved, Acts ii. 25.* These things are incompatible with hatred.

I do verily believe, that there is a moral fitness in the sufferings of the Son of God, but the moral fitness thereof is past our finding out; for without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh, and justified in the spirit. May we not adoringly say, O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! *Rom. xi. 33.* But the things which we know not now, we shall know hereafter, when the mystery of God shall be finished; then shall we see as we are seen, and know as we are known, and clearly apprehend that for which we are apprehended

of

of Christ Jesus. O how will our hearts burn within us, when our exalted Lord and head shall praise his Father in the midst of his great congregation!

The sufferings of this present life are of three kinds. The first are those which come from the sin-avenging hand of God; of this sort was the destruction of the old world by water, and the overthrow of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* by fire. A second kind of sufferings are those which are as useful physick for our distempered minds; and of this sort are the main body of the sufferings of this present time, which God in his wise and good providence brings upon us; and he doth it for our profit, *that we may be partakers of his holiness*, Heb. xii. 10. The third and last kind of sufferings are those that intitle the sufferers *to an exceeding and eternal weight of glory*. Of this sort are all the sufferings which we sustain in and for well-doing. This is plain from the words of Christ; *Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you*, Mat. v. 11, 12. Hence the Apostle saith, *Rejoice, in as much as ye are partakers of the sufferings of Christ; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you. If any man suffer as a christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf*, 1 Pet. iv. 13, 14, 16.

Thus, Sir, I hope I have given proof, that many sufferings are not punishments. I further hint, that sufferings agree very well with a probation-state; and such our present life is. I conclude therefore, that if all well-meaning persons did rightly distinguish between suffering and punishment, they would learn with the Apostle, *in every state therewith to be content*,

content, and forbear to sing with the forbidden tune, *The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the childrens teeth are set on edge*. I presume, Sir, that you yourself have met with sufferings in your own person and family : I appeal to your own conscience, whether you think yourself under the divine displeasure ; and that the sin-avenging hand of God is upon you either for your own, or for your forefathers sins, because of these sufferings ? I conclude, that there is much suffering in the world, which ought not to be scored up on the tally of punishment.

I come now to take my leave with you at this time, and crave leave to assure you, that I have looked upon you as a scholar, as a gentleman, and as a professed minister of the gospel of Christ ; and I beg leave to assure you, that I am not conscious to myself, that I have treated you with indecency or ill manners. I further add, that when I wrote my *New Year's Gift*, I did not know which side of the question you were of. You might have been entirely of my way of thinking, for any thing I then knew to the contrary ; but I assure you, Sir, that if I had known your sentiments then, as well as I do now, I should have wrote the same things without variation ; for I conclude with the Apostle, that *if I should seek to please men, I should not be the servant of Christ*. I further assure you, that I think the cause, which I am engaged in, is a cause worth contending for, and for that reason I have thus engaged further in it ; and give you and others to understand, that I still retain the same opinion. What the event may be I know not, but willingly leave to him who is the wise disposer of all things, and gladly recommend it to his blessing, which maketh rich. Nevertheless, methinks I easily foresee what the event will be ; if any minister should, through more zeal than knowledge, censure this perform-

performance as coming from hell, or should consign me over to the devil and his angels, I easily foresee, that the less knowing part of the audience will have their minds filled with a horrid gloom, while the more sagacious will have their cheeks filled with smiles, and their mouths with laughter. But as you, Sir, are a scholar and a gentleman, I don't expect such treatment at your hands; but dare appeal to your own conscience, whether you think the doctrine I have maintained, does in the least vilify the name of God? I intreat you to make favourable allowances for the meanness of my stile; I hope you will consider, that, I am so wedded to a rural life, that I must speak in a rustic stile, or not at all. If what I have done be worthy of blame, I bespeak it all to myself. I would not that any innocent person should be wounded through my sides. I therefore assure you, that I wrote this without the consent or knowledge of any man living: and herein I hope I have done nothing to incur your displeasure, at least not so far as to cause you to withdraw that noble character from me (which you so publickly gave me on the 30th of *January* last) even that of a bold writer. My design is to be always valiant for the truth; but my purpose and resolution is to join the meekness of the lamb, and the innocence of the dove, with the boldness of the lion.

But if you should think that some passages carry in them the nature of reproof, I hope you will not think them severe, beyond what the nature of the argument will well bear; and in this case I shall not ask your pardon, but boldly demand your favour and friendship; for I am assured by the wise *Solomon*, that *he that rebuketh a man, afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue*, *Prov. xxviii. 23.* I hope that you will never give me any cause to repent for trusting to *Solomon's* judgment,

judgment. Solomon also saith, *Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee*, Prov. ix. 8. Hence I note two things; *first*, that wise men may sometimes do things worthy of reproof; *for the wisdom of the wise is sometimes destroyed, and the understanding of the prudent is hid*, as I verily think yours was on the 30th of January last; and *2dly*, I observe that wise men love those that reprove them. *None but scorers and wicked men hate reprovers*, Prov. ix. 7. Thus Solomon speaks; *He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame; and he that rebuketh a wicked man, getteth himself a blot: reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee*. Hence, Sir, you may easily discern the good opinion that I have of you, and the great confidence I place in you, or else you must think that there is something very extraordinary in me to run the desperate risk of getting a blot and shame from the hatred of a man of your warmth and power.

But if, after all, you should think that some expressions have the tincture of severity in them, I beg leave to assure you, that it hath and shall be abundantly made up to you in my sincere wishes for your welfare and happiness. I entreat you to take the following as a specimen of the whole.

I wish you, Sir, all peace and pleasantness, a good understanding, and a happy increase in all grace and virtue; and, in one word, all happiness in both worlds;

And am



Your sincere Friend,

AMOS HARRISON.



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